



# NEWS FROM **ULSTER COUNTY** County Executive Jen Metzger

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## **Sarah Kramer-Harrison to Serve as County's First Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces**

**KINGSTON, NY** - Sarah Kramer-Harrison will serve as the County's first Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces, a newly created position in the Department of Tourism that will support the arts as an economic, educational, and community asset, and capitalize on opportunities to integrate arts and culture in parks and open spaces. County Executive Metzger included the position in her 2025 Executive Budget to advance the County's recently completed Arts and Culture Master Plan and promote the County's unique artistic, cultural, and natural resources.

The Arts and Culture Plan — "Imagine Ulster" — was commissioned by the County Legislature and drew on the input of hundreds of residents and cultural stakeholders. The Plan outlines strategies to strengthen support for artists and cultural organizations, expand arts education and access, and promote the arts as a driver of economic development. (For more information on the Plan, visit: <https://participate.ulstercountyny.gov/arts-culture-plan>.)

Among the responsibilities of her new position, Kramer-Harrison will develop a centralized platform to publicize arts culture events across the County, create a resource hub for artists, promote the use of parks and open spaces for arts-related events and activities, and work with other County departments to integrate the arts in County initiatives and programs, from public health to youth programming to economic development.

Kramer-Harrison is uniquely positioned to lead this work, with extensive experience in both the arts and government, and a track record of integrating the arts in County programming, including in her previous position with the Crime Victims Assistance Program and the Intimate Partner Violence Intervention program in the Office of the District Attorney. She brings more

than 20 years of cross-sector leadership in arts education, trauma-informed programming, youth engagement, and grant development.

Kramer-Harrison holds a Bachelor of Music from Berklee College of Music, with a concentration in sound engineering and production, and a Master of Education from Marist College. She is certified to teach music and mathematics in New York State and has completed extensive training in grant writing and management.

Prior to assuming this new role with the County, Kramer-Harris served as Director of Projects for the Ulster County District Attorney's Office, and before that, as Senior Crime Victims Counselor and Volunteer Coordinator with the County's Crime Victims Assistance Program (CVAP) from 2016 to 2024. She is also founder and owner of Kramer-Harrison Music, leading youth and elder-focused arts programs for more than 20 years. She has contributed to the SageArts elder storytelling project, collaborated with schools and nonprofit partners, produced multiple albums, and earned recognition for her lifelong volunteer work promoting equity, access, and the arts.

"As an artist and arts educator with experience in government and a track record of integrating the arts in County services, Sarah brings the perfect combination of skills and knowledge to this unique position and a deep commitment to arts," **said Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger.** "I look forward to working with her as we bring the Arts and Culture Plan to life and position Ulster County as an artistic and cultural hub for the region."

"Ulster County's artistic community is a vibrant, diverse, and vital part of who we are, and I'm honored to support and uplift the people who make it thrive," **said Sarah Kramer-Harrison.** "I'm excited to work side by side with artists, cultural leaders, and creative organizations to bring our Arts and Culture Plan to life, and to help build a stronger, more connected arts ecosystem — one that celebrates local talent, expands access to the arts, and brings creative energy into every corner of County life."

"The hiring of Sarah as Ulster County's first-ever Director of Arts, Culture, and Open Spaces marks a historic moment for our community," **said Peter Criswell, Chair of the Ulster County Legislature.** "This role was born out of a two-year collaborative effort to develop the Ulster County Arts and Culture Plan, and Sarah is the ideal person to bring that vision to life. As a lifelong musician, educator, and seasoned County employee, she brings a rare and powerful blend of artistic insight and government expertise. I'm confident that under her leadership, we'll see transformative support for individual artists, cultural organizations, and creative businesses — and a bold, inclusive implementation of our strategic priorities."

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